

## IC-SAT100 Satellite Radio and Rebelle Rally: **Case Study**



# Icom's IC-SAT100 Satellite Radio Improves Large Event's Communications

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A case study prepared by Icom America, manufacturers of high-performance, award-winning radios for over 60 years.

# Rebelle Rally 2020

The Rebelle Rally is the first women's long-distance, off-road navigation rally in the United States.



## Featured Product

IC-SAT100 handheld radio



## On Your Marks, Get Set, Go!

The Rebelle Rally completed its fifth annual competition. This isn't your average event. The Rebelle Rally is made up of strong women who live for adventure and possess a healthy dose (this might be up for debate) of competitive spirit added to the mix. More than 2,000 km across the Nevada and California desert, teams compete through hidden checkpoints, distance, and time, navigating through it all with only maps, a compass, and a road book (for checkpoint navigation). No smartphones. No tablets. No GPS. Just a two-person team of badass women – off-road and off the grid. Rebelle Rally makes it clear: this event is not a race but a competition.

Through seven days of competition (10 days total), the 2020 Rebelle Rally participants hopped into their 4x4 or crossover vehicles (off-road vehicles range from heavy-duty trucks to sport utility vehicles) and made their way to previously-undisclosed checkpoints each day.

Friendly disclaimer: the satellite radios are not being used by participants but by the event staff. Competitors are not permitted to carry along any device that enables real-time communication or GPS-enabled mapping for the event's duration. Don't worry – there are other location-enabled devices on participant vehicles for location tracking/safety purposes.

## IC-SAT100: A Gamechanger

Rally staff used different satellite and GPS phones with VHF 'race radios' installed in staff vehicles in previous years. They decided they would try something new this year, as previous years' comms weren't quite up to par. In the past, they discovered many dropped communications; the race radios weren't powerful enough for the range, and rental companies failed to deliver the complete package promised. They struggled to get the proper antennas, adapters, and cradles.

Iridium had already been working with the Rebelle Rally staff by way of Roadpost, a company that provides satellite voice and data solutions from Iridium and Inmarsat. Roadpost provided Iridium devices that linked directly to official rally scoring. Because of this confident relationship that the rally staff formed with Iridium, Iridium contacted Icom to see if 35 IC-SAT100 satellite radios and accessories could be donated to assist the rally support staff. Iridium would provide all airtime for this rally.



One of Icom's senior managers, Rodney Grim, traveled to Rebelle Rally headquarters to aid with the SAT100 installation and programming. After, they went to the rally starting line to assist with any other installation and equipment needs and address any rally staff questions or concerns about the newly-installed system and radios.

The SAT100 was the perfect choice for this application. They were used with support staff vehicles by communicating locations, updates on supplies, and any issues that came up during the rally. It was assured that all accessories and required equipment would be in place and ready for the 10-day competition. Distances ranged, but the rally staff was scattered across roughly 500 miles. Event staff, checkpoint officials, mechanics, and safety support all now had reliable and dependable comms.

*"The absolute quality of the communications, it is a really robust handset, they are extremely dependable. We found this to be our best solution." – Emily Miller, Rebelle Rally director*



Emily Miller, Rebelle Rally director, was in search of perfection, or as close to perfection as you could get. "It's a different type of competition. Our staff is our support team. 97 staff. 86 on the rally course. To get 76 competitors down the trail successfully and safely is really sensitive. The two most important things for us are safety and the integrity of the fairness of the competition. Those two things come first." The radios were robust, tough, and reliable. "We could count on the quality of the communication coming from the SAT100. "Working directly with Icom and Iridium, we were able to make sure we had new handsets. We got two channels set up, media and safety, with an emergency override. We don't think there is a more reliable and dependable solution that is as cost-effective as Icom's SAT100."



Miller stressed, "We are going for ten days; it is extremely remote with extreme climates. People are going to be tough on the equipment because of the environment. At the end of the day, it has to work. Equipment used need to perform as advertised, be durable, and reliable. This is the true litmus test for Rebelle Rally vendors. We have to have products that don't fail. We have moms, wives, and CEOs out there. People have to get home safely. We cannot cut corners." The radios needed to be reliable. They needed to produce clear audio. They needed to be Icom.



*“We could have gone with cheaper systems, but you get what you pay for.” – Emily Miller, Rebelle Rally director*

Sure, there are many land mobile options available for large events. You can use LTE or WLAN radios, as long as all radios are within reach of a carrier tower or a Wi-Fi network. But for an event with several geographic locations, to remain connected regardless of where the terrain and route lead – satellite communications are the smartest and most efficient means of staying in contact. No wireless infrastructure is needed, new or current, nor a signal from a terrestrial carrier tower to reach others. All that is required is a clear view of the sky to get a signal to one of Iridium’s 66 low earth orbit satellites.

### Satellite Radio Provides Reliable Communications

The SAT100 handheld satellite radio is also a great option if looking to increase a current communications setup’s capabilities. By connecting Icom’s VE-PG4 RoIP gateway, devices of differing protocols (e.g., LTE, WLAN, IDAS™, SIP phones, P25, analog radio systems) can seamlessly interconnect, which makes expansion possibilities virtually endless.

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